

A TIMELINE OF ALABAMA'S ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In our celebration of this millennial year, the staff of the Alabama State Council on the Arts decided that a long look back over the past one thousand years, with the purpose of tracing our state's artistic and cultural development, would prove instructive to the staff and, we hope, to you, our reader. As we worked on developing a timeline of significant events, it evolved that the exercise was not only a learning experience, it was a joyful and rewarding undertaking. As the list grew longer, we found that our feeling of pride in our state's accomplishments increased exponentially. We were delighted, and amazed, to learn just how much Alabamians have contributed to the arts in all categories—visual, literary and performing. We offer the following milestones, which we in no way claim to be a comprehensive listing, for your examination and comment. We believe you will share our pride in the cultural history of Alabama.

Circa 1000 A.D.: Large permanent towns are established along Alabama's rivers. The inhabitants of such towns as those at Moundville construct enormous earthworks around a central plaza and share a distinctive assemblage of artistic motifs, including crosses, sun circles, hands, and serpents.

1539-1543: Hernando de Soto's expedition to North America greatly impacts indigenous people in Alabama and sets in motion a process of cultural interaction between Indians and Old World Cultures. Four separate narrative accounts by survivors of this adventure are subsequently written, offering the only eyewitness accounts of the zenith of pre-Columbian Indian civilization in the South.

1702: Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville establishes Mobile as a French settlement.

1703: The first Mardi Gras is celebrated in Mobile.

1791: Naturalist William Bartram publishes *Travels Through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida: The Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek*. This collection of drawings and journal entries from a 1771-1775 expedition gives the world an early detailed description of the southeastern United States.

1819: Alabama becomes the 22nd state admitted into the Union.

1830: Joseph Thoit Moore, a portrait artist, moves to Montgomery from Ohio and quickly becomes the City's most prolific painter. Moore painted more than 400 portraits before his death, from yellow fever, in 1854.

1830: The Forks of Cypress plantation house in Florence is built for James Jackson.

1831: The process of removal of Southeastern Alabama Indian groups begins. By 1838, most Alabama Indians have been forced to move to Oklahoma.

1831: The University of Alabama is established in Tuscaloosa, offering a focal point for cultural activities. The University environment gives birth to the "Tuscaloosa Bards," including, among others, W.R. Smith, A.B. Meek, Henry W. Hubbard and Jeremiah Clemens.

1832: A gold rush in eastern Alabama brings a rush of settlers into the new state.

1833: A meteorite storm lights up the skies over Alabama, and inspires the subsequent song and legend.

1837: Early iron foundries in Mobile begin to make decorative ironwork for which the city will become known.



Mardi Gras in Mobile

Alabama State Council on the Arts



1820s drawing of two Creek Indians

Basil Hall

1838-1861



Benjamin Lloyd's hymnbook

Alabama State Council on the Arts



The spiral staircases in the State Capitol were designed and built by Horace King.

Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel



Alabama River at Selma, attributed to William Frye, c. 1853/55.

Selma-Dallas County Library

1838: Phillip Henry Gosse, an English schoolteacher, begins an eight-month visit to Dallas County, Alabama. He later publishes *Letters from Alabama*, an account of his stay with descriptions of flora, fauna and social customs of the time.

1839: Members of the Herd family from Scotland are the first to mine marble and to fashion tombstones from the Sylacauga deposit. Other stone cutting shops soon take advantage of this resource.

1841: Professor Frederick A.P. Barnard of the University of Alabama is the first to publish in a scholarly journal the formula for daguerreotype chemicals that made reliable portrait photography successful on a wide scale.

1842: Construction begins on Gaineswood, considered by many to be Alabama's finest neo-classical residence. The owner and architect General Nathan Bryan Whitfield blends his ideas with contemporary architectural notions of the time to create this masterpiece.

1843: Benjamin Lloyd, a Primitive Baptist preacher in Wetumpka, revises his hymnbook, *Primitive Hymns*. This edition of his unadorned collection of 18th- and 19th-century hymns will remain a standard source for early-style hymn singing to this day.

1845: Johnson Jones Hooper publishes *The Adventures of Simon Suggs*. Born in Wilmington, North Carolina, Hooper was an attorney who came to Chambers County at age 20. He will become famous for his humorous sketches of the new Alabama featuring the frontier rascal Simon Suggs.

1846: Horace King, an African-American architect and master bridge builder, is granted his freedom. The designs/creations of Horace King include the lattice-truss-designed bridges that unified the Chattahoochee Valley into a single economic unit, and the spiral staircases of the Alabama state capitol, which are still in use.

1850: German immigrant William Frye of Huntsville paints a famous view of Demopolis. This, and his later landscapes, present a unique, unparalleled set of images of life when cotton was king, in the 1850s, from Huntsville, Selma and Demopolis.

1851: Albert James Pickett wrote *History of Alabama*.

1853: Joseph Glover Baldwin publishes *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi: A Series of Sketches*, which becomes one of the most popular examples of Old Southwest humor.

1854: The State of Alabama passes the Public School Act.

1854: Adrian E. Thompson, an Alabama-born artist, paints the oft-reproduced view of the bridge over the Alabama River at Wetumpka (one of Horace King's bridges).

1855: Alexander Beaufort Meek publishes *Red Eagle*, a lyrical epic poem about Creek chief William Weatherford.

1857: Octavia Celeste Valentine Walton LeVert publishes a two-volume book, *Souvenirs of Travel*, based on letters written to her mother, Sarah Minge Walker, while Octavia traveled in Europe. As a result of this widely read book, Madame LeVert becomes one of the best known women in the world, and her salon in Mobile becomes famous all over the nation.

1857-1859: Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Huntsville is constructed. This is one of the state's most impressive examples of "Ecclesiological Gothic" style.

1861: A.C. McIntyre, a Montgomery photographer, photographs the inauguration of Jefferson Davis. He and other pioneer Alabama photographers, such as Montgomery's J.H. Lakin and S.P. and H.P. Tresslar, document life in Central Alabama during the 19th and early 20th century.

1861: William Russell Smith, widely known as the father of Alabama literature writes *The History and Debates of the Convention of the People of Alabama* (Secession

1861-1906

Convention), one of the most valuable historical documents ever produced in the state.

1865: A year after the Emancipation Proclamation, enslaved African-Americans in Alabama are actually freed; it is the end of the Civil War. This changes educational, political and religious institutions throughout the South.

1866: *St. Elmo*, by Augusta Evans Wilson is published. This author, from Mobile, becomes, arguably, the most successful popular woman writer between the Civil War and beginning of the 20th century.

1867: *Tiger-Lilies* is published by Sidney Lanier (1842-1881) Based upon his experiences in the Civil War, Lanier's book was written when he lived in Montgomery and worked as a clerk at the Exchange Hotel.

1870: The Belcher, Henry and McPherson families are in full pottery production on Sand Mountain near Duck Springs. Their inventive use of regional glazes and inscribed decorations will make their pottery desirable among art collectors in the late 20th century.

1871: The crossing of two railroad lines in north central Alabama ensures that Birmingham develops into a major industrial city.

1872: Auburn University, first chartered in 1856, becomes the state's land-grant college. Through the years, the institution will become known for its outstanding College of Architecture, Design and Construction.

1873: A.C. Oxford, Birmingham's first resident photographer, photographs the Magic City, from its beginnings in the early 1870s to the mid-1880s, thereby creating a significant body of work and one that was unusual for the state in his day.

1884: Booker T. Washington organizes Tuskegee Institute's first Tuskegee Quartet.

1891: Zora Neale Hurston is born in Notasulga. She will become an outstanding writer, and will be known as "the queen of the Harlem Renaissance," counting among her contemporaries Langston Hughes, with whom she collaborated on a play, *Mule Bone*.

1898: Howard Weeden's *Shadows on the Wall*, a collection of portraits, is published and brings this Huntsville artist, a woman, national attention.

1899: The photography of Mary Morgan Keipp of Selma is first exhibited. Subsequently, she was the only Alabamian and Southerner to participate in seven landmark exhibitions (with Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen and other luminaries) that created art photography in America and England at the turn of the century

1901: The Alabama Department of Archives and History is established as the nation's first such state agency. Over the years, the Archives will become the repository of Alabama art as well as official state records.

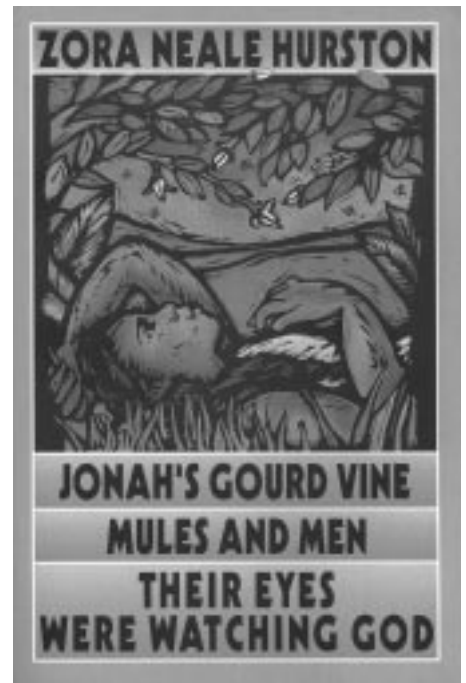
1901: *Up From Slavery* is published. Its author, Booker T. Washington, is president of Tuskegee Institute and the leading spokesperson for improving relationships between African-Americans and white people.

1903: Guiseppe Moretti, an Italian immigrant sculptor, begins work on Vulcan, a large cast iron figure. This and a smaller marble, "Head of Christ," will win acclaim at the 1904 St. Louis exposition.

1904: Helen Keller graduates cum laude from Radcliffe. While a student, she had written what would later be published as *The Story of My Life*. She becomes the world's best known advocate for the disabled.

1905: Birmingham Music Club is founded.

1906: Architect Frank Lockwood designs additions to the State Capitol. This talented Montgomerian later creates many beautiful Tudor-inspired structures during the 1920s.



Sand Mountain pottery



Jam session at the Athens Fiddlers Convention

1907-1929



Popular Music Archives—Middle Tennessee State University

Cow Cow Davenport



ASCA/Joey Brackner

Ave Maria Grotto



Alabama Music Hall of Fame

Delmore Brothers

1907: The Marietta Johnson School of Organic Education opens in the utopian community of Fairhope. This progressive school presents a new approach to education, prominently featuring visual arts and dance.

1912: Florence native W. C. Handy publishes the “Memphis Blues.” This, along with his later works, such as the “St. Louis Blues” and “Beale St. Blues” establishes a vernacular music genre within popular American culture. For this, he becomes known as the “Father of the Blues”.

1917: Walter and Bessie Bellingrath begin building a large garden at their country home on the Fowl River in Mobile County. In 1932, Bellingrath Gardens opened to the public and is today considered one of the nation’s most famous gardens.

1918: Brother Joseph Zoetl, a Benedictine monk from Bavaria, constructs a miniature church of concrete at St. Bernard’s Abbey in Cullman. Over the next 40 years, this partially disabled clergyman will build Ave Maria Grotto, an impressive example of the Benedictine grotto tradition.

1918: Well-known jazz musician and Mobile native, James Reese Europe, brings jazz to France as the leader of a military band during World War I. The popularity of this “Jazz King” starts a century-long French infatuation with this American art form.

1919: The Boll Weevil statue is dedicated in Enterprise, celebrating the economic prosperity brought about by agricultural diversification.

1919: Nat “King” Cole is born in Montgomery.

1922: Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald publishes her first story in *The New York Tribune*. Though she will labor in her husband’s shadow, this creative dancer, artist and writer will not only be an inspiration for her husband’s work in the early 20s and 30s, but for generations of young writers who come after her, particularly female artists.

1924: The first Athens fiddlers’ convention is held. Eventually this event will be organized in 1967 as the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention and will be considered one of the nation’s most important.

1924: Hudson Strode joins the faculty of the English Department at the University of Alabama. The teaching and inspiration of several generations of literary talent by this Demopolis native will continue until the 1960s. Strode is widely known for his biographical series on Jefferson Davis.

1925: African-American gospel singers, Charles Bridges and Ed Sherrill, meet in Bessemer and form the Birmingham Jubilee Singers, the first quartet to take the infectious Birmingham style of a *cappella* gospel singing outside of the state.

1926: Roderick MacKenzie begins painting a mural on the interior rotunda of the State Capitol. The result of this four-year project is a panorama depicting the state’s history. MacKenzie’s career began in the late 19th century in his native Mobile as a portrait painter. He later worked in India and lived long enough to take part in WPA arts projects.

1927: The Alabama Theatre in Birmingham opens as the state’s largest and grandest movie palace. For 10 cents, moviegoers can see the latest attractions and sing along to the music of the “Mighty Wurlitzer” while luxuriating in air-conditioned Renaissance splendor.

1927: Birmingham’s Charles “Cow Cow” Davenport records “Jim Crow Blues.”

1928: Grover Hall, Sr. wins the Pulitzer Prize for Journalism for his writing and editing in *The Montgomery Advertiser*. Hall was a decisive player in the destroying of the power held by the Ku Klux Klan across the state. A play based on his courageous stand, *Grover*, written by Randy Hall of Anniston, would be mounted by the Alabama Shakespeare Festival’s Southern Writer’s Project in the mid-1990s.

1929: The Stripling Brothers of Pickens County record sixteen tunes at the Brunswick studio in Chicago. Charlie Stripling (1896-1966) is considered one of the

1929-1939

greatest American fiddlers of all time, and records the classic “Wolves a-Howling” during this session. He becomes Alabama’s most recorded fiddler, with “Coal Mine Blues” becoming one of his most popular tunes.

1931: Samuel Minturn Peck of Tuscaloosa is named Alabama’s first poet laureate by Governor Bibb Graves.

1931: William Dawson organizes the School of Music at Tuskegee Institute. This choir director and composer gained fame by putting aspects of African-American folk music into orchestral arrangements.

1932: The Birmingham Symphony gives its first concert.

1932: Alton and Rabon Delmore of Elkmont, a.k.a. the Delmore Brothers, join the Grand Ole Opry. As one of the first of the close harmony duet groups of the 1930s, they have some of the music industry’s first cross-over hits.

1933: P.H. Polk becomes the head of the Photography Division at Tuskegee Institute. For the next twenty years, he continues to photograph rural Alabama and its inhabitants, as well as making portraits of some of the great leaders of the Twentieth Century.

1933: T.S. Stribling’s *The Store* wins the Pulitzer Prize. The book is the second of a trilogy: *The Forge* (1931), *The Store* (1932), and *The Unfinished Cathedral* (1934). Stribling grew up and was schooled in North Alabama, with degrees from Florence State and the University of Alabama.

1933: Kelly Fitzpatrick establishes the Dixie Art Colony near Wetumpka for the purpose of providing instruction to promising young artists.

1933: The establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority brings a new awareness of the outside world through the electrification of rural Alabama. The resulting radio audience is presented with a new venue for the rich regional musical heritage of the Tennessee Valley, the Shoals and Sand Mountain.

1934: Judge Jackson, an African-American shape-note singer from Ozark, compiles and publishes *The Colored Sacred Harp*. This hymnbook affords black Sacred Harp composers an outlet for their works and becomes a much-loved emblem of a regional song tradition.

1934: *Stars Fell on Alabama*, by New Yorker Carl Carmer, is published. This romanticized account of his years in Alabama was a non-fiction best seller.

1935: Author Clarence Cason, professor at the University of Alabama, sees publication of his novel, *Ninety Degrees in the Shade*.

1935: Blues pianist Frank “Springback” James records “Poor Coal Loader.”

1936: The original *Sacred Harp* (Denson Revision), is published in Haleyville in 1936 (begun by patriarchs Seaborn M. and Thomas Jackson Denson and completed after their deaths by T.J.’s son Paine Denson). From the mid-19th century to the present, the Denson family popularize Sacred Harp music in North Alabama.

1936: Writer James Agee and photographer Walker Evans come to Alabama and live with sharecroppers in Hale County. Evans had been to Alabama previously, while working for the FSA. Their resulting collaboration, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, becomes an American classic.

1938: Hank Williams makes his public debut singing “WPA Blues” at the Empire Theatre in Montgomery.

1939: A “Usonian” residence for the Rosenbaum family, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, is completed in Florence.

1939: Tallulah Bankhead triumphs on Broadway in Lillian Hellman’s *The Little Foxes*. Known as a sultry Hollywood film actress from such screen classics as *Lifeboat*,



Hank Williams

Alabama Department of Archives and History



Tallulah Bankhead

Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel



Erskine Hawkins

Alabama Music Hall of Fame

1939-1960



Horace Perry

Bill Traylor



Center for Public Television

William Bradford Huie



Courtesy: Charles Louvin

Charlie Louvin

she has a four-week run in a non-speaking part on stage and appeared in two films before she was 17. Her autobiography, *Tallulah*, is published in 1952.

1939: Birmingham jazz musician Erskine Hawkins records his composition “Tuxedo Junction”, which becomes a worldwide hit during World War II.

1940: The works of the impoverished street artist Bill Traylor are shown at the New South Gallery in Montgomery.

1940: In Livingston, Ruby Pickens Tartt hosts a famous folksong recording trip by John and Alan Lomax of the Library of Congress. The resulting recordings contain some of the most famous American folk songs ever collected, and they introduce the impressive talents of Dock Reed and Vera Hall to the world.

1941: Julian Rayford of Mobile has his classic novel, *Cottonmouth*, published

1942: William Bradford Huie’s first novel, *Mud on the Stars*, is published. The Hartselle native is a novelist and journalist and publishes six novels between 1942 and 1945. He publishes two short story collaborations and nine books of non-fiction. His other works include *The Execution of Private Slovik*, *The Revolt of Mamie Stover*, and *The Americanization of Emily*.

1946: Children’s Theatre of Birmingham is founded.

1946: Carolyn Voshell begins teaching at Huntingdon College. This violinist will teach until 1982 and be one of the organizers of Montgomery Symphony.

1950: Town and Gown Theater, Birmingham’s longest-running professional theatre, is organized by James Hatcher.

1951: The Birmingham Museum of Art is founded.

1951: Dexter Johnson establishes the first Shoals-area recording studio in Sheffield. Through the remainder of the 1950s, recording studios pop up all over the area. These include Shoals Recording Services, Tune Publishing Company, Judd Records, Spar Records and FAME Recording Studio. Songs such as Arthur Alexander’s “You Better Move On” will become national hits.

1952: Well-known Birmingham musician Sonny Blount changes his name to Sun Ra and begins his unique cosmic interpretation of jazz.

1952: Florence’s Sam Phillips founds Sun Records in Memphis, where he will later discover Elvis Presley, B. B. King, and Jerry Lee Lewis, among others.

1953: Montgomery born mezzo-soprano Nell Rankin opens as Carmen at Covent Gardens, after joining the Metropolitan Opera in 1951. The Alabama legislature honors her by joint resolution in 1957 as Alabama’s “cultural ambassador.”

1954: William March’s *The Bad Seed* is published. This Mobile native wrote six novel collections between 1933 and 1954 and three short stories. Although he is best known for *The Bad Seed*, his novels, *Company K* and *The Looking Glass*, are superior.

1955: The Montgomery Bus Boycott takes place.

1955: The Huntsville Symphony is founded.

1956: Country music artists Charlie and Ira Loudermilk’s (the Louvin Brothers) song, “I Don’t Believe You’ve Met My Baby,” hits number one, despite the emerging popularity of Rock and Roll. Their close harmony tenor music continues an Alabama tradition begun by the Delmore brothers.

1957: Auburn novelist Madison Jones publishes *The Innocent*, the first of ten novels he will write over a 40-year period.

1958: The Montgomery Civic Ballet is founded.

1959: Fame Recording Studio is established in Muscle Shoals; Tuscaloosa’s Dinah Washington records “What a Difference a Day Makes.”

1960: *To Kill a Mockingbird* is published. Nelle Harper Lee, born in Monroeville,

1960-1972

is awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1961 for her work, and the book is subsequently made into an Academy Award-winning film.

1961: William Gibson's drama, *The Miracle Worker*, based upon the life of Helen Keller, is presented in the Shoals. Later, this outdoor performance will be presented during the annual Helen Keller festival in Tuscumbia.

1961: William Christenberry makes his first photo of the Palmist Building in Havana, Alabama. This begins decades of work by the artist documenting aspects of the Alabama landscape.

1964: Emmylou Harris debuts at Horsepens 40, a new bluegrass and old-time music venue in St. Clair County, founded by folk music enthusiast Warren Musgrove. The site becomes synonymous with the resurgence of local interest in indigenous music during the 1970s.

1965: Shirley Ann Grau, who grew up in Montgomery, wins a Pulitzer for her book, *Keepers of the House*.

1965: Jesse Hill Ford, born in Troy, sees publication of *The Liberation of Lord Byron Jones* by Little Brown.

1965: Leighton native Percy Sledge's "When A Man Loves A Woman" is recorded at Quinvy studios in Muscle Shoals. This soul classic becomes an international hit and wins the artist a gold record.

1966: The Alabama State Council on the Arts is established as the official state arts agency of Alabama.

1966: A television presentation of the Truman Capote short story, "A Christmas Memory," wins a Peabody award. The story is based upon Capote's early years in Monroeville. His best known book is *In Cold Blood*. His novels, *Other Voices, Other Rooms* and *The Grass Harp*, are set in Alabama.

1966: The Alabama School of Fine Arts opens in Birmingham.

1966: *Fancy's Knell* by Babs Deal wins an Edgar Award for best first novel. She will later write *Three O'Clock in the Morning* and *Acres of Afternoon*.

1966: Prattville's Wilson Pickett records "Mustang Sally" in Muscle Shoals.

1967: Birmingham Creative Dance Group is incorporated under the leadership of Laura Knox. This group later becomes Southern Danceworks, the only professional modern dance group in Alabama.

1967: Borden Deal publishes *The Least One*.

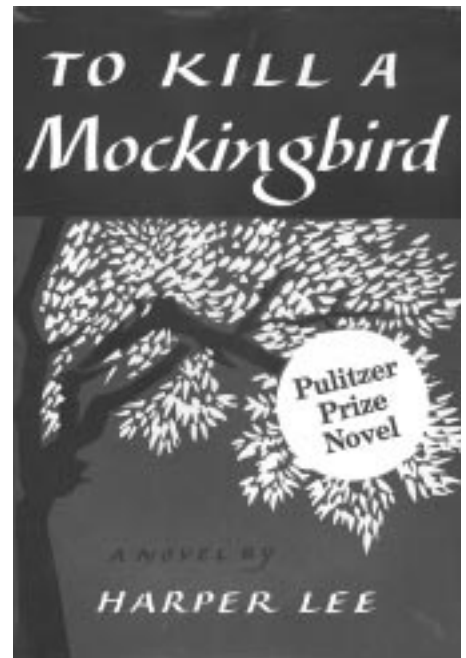
1969: Three cousins in Fort Payne form a band called "Young Country," later known as "Alabama." They become one of the greatest country acts of all times.

1969: Journalist Kathryn Tucker Windham begins publishing her Jeffrey series of Alabama ghost story books with *Thirteen Alabama Ghosts and Jeffrey*, in collaboration with Margaret G. Figh (of Huntingdon College/Montgomery). The popularity of these books will lead Windham to become one of Alabama's most sought-after story-tellers around the country.

1970: The Rolling Stones record "Wild Horses" and "Brown Sugar" at the Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, established in Sheffield in 1968.

1971: The first Kentuck Festival is held in Northport. The event quickly becomes an important regional venue for visual artists and an annual showcase for nationally-known self-taught artists, including Jimmie Lee Sudduth, Lonnie Holley, Bernice Sims, the Tolliver family, and Charlie and Annie Lucas.

1972: Huntsville artist David Parrish has his first one-man show in New York City, marking his recognition as a leading painter in the photorealistic style. His technically demanding work captures the reflective surfaces of such pop culture images as racing cars and porcelain figures.



Portrait of William Christenberry by Nall.



Katherine Tucker Windham

1974-1994



Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel

Alabama



ASF/Scarsbrook

Greta Lambert in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival production of *Fair and Tender Ladies*.



Sonia Sanchez

1974: The Alabama Dance Council is created in Birmingham by Laura Knox, Lou Wall, Phoebe Barr, Jeanette Crew, Theda Cowan and others.

1974: Roger Brown, internationally recognized artist and central figure of the Chicago Imagist School, completes the hinged construction/painting, *Autobiography in the Shape of Alabama*. The piece becomes part of the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and relates his rural family history in Alabama.

1974: Joe David Brown's *Addie Pray: A Novel* is published. This Birmingham novelist and journalist has three of his novels made into films. His first novel, *Stars in My Crown*, is filmed with Joel McRae. *Kings Go Forth* is filmed with Frank Sinatra and *Addie Pray* is filmed under the title *Paper Moon* starring Ryan and Tatum O'Neal.

1981: Alabama native, African-American Willie Ruff, Yale University professor of music, music historian, author and jazz musician is the first jazz player to take his ensemble to the Republic of China during the cultural thaw of the late 1970's.

1981: The State of Alabama Ballet is founded.

1982: W.C. Handy Music Festival begins in Florence.

1983: Sacred Harp singer Dewey Williams of Ozark is awarded a National Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts.

1983: *Women, Race, and Class* by Angela Davis is published.

1984: Mark Childress's first book, *A World Made of Fire*, is published by Alfred A. Knopf. Childress will continue to write novels and children's books, and one of his titles, *Crazy in Alabama*, is made into a movie in 1999.

1985: The Alabama Shakespeare Festival opens its new facility in the Blount Cultural Park in Montgomery. ASF began in 1972 as a summer theater project in the Anniston High School. After its relocation and subsequent maturation in Montgomery, the festival is a key Alabama cultural institution and fifth largest Shakespeare festival in the world.

1985: Sonja Sanchez's *Homegirls and Handgrenades* wins an American Book Award for Poetry. This Birmingham native teaches throughout the U.S. and is currently Temple University poet-in-residence and professor of English.

1985: Tuskegee's Lionel Richie wins the Grammy Award for Album of the Year and also the American Music Award for Best Pop Male Vocalist.

1987: Mary Ward Brown of Marion, Alabama, receives the Pen/Hemingway Award for Best First Fiction for her first short story collection, *Tongues of Flames*.

1988: The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, founded in 1930, opens a new facility in the Blount Cultural Park.

1990: Alabama Music Hall of Fame opens in Tuscumbia

1991: The Wiregrass Museum of Art in Dothan opens a main gallery retrofitted from a 1913 power plant listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. Planned phases of construction triple the space and add an auditorium.

1992: Birmingham's Fannie Flagg's novel *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* (1987) is adapted for the film *Fried Green Tomatoes*.

1992: The Alabama Writers' Forum is founded.

1992: Jerry Brown, a ninth generation potter and narrative quilter Nora Ezell are honored at the National Heritage Fellowship Program by the National Endowment for the Arts.

1994: *Forrest Gump*, a film based upon the 1986 Winston Groom novel wins four Academy awards including Best Picture and Best Actor.

1994: E.O. Wilson's autobiography, *The Naturalist*, is published. Wilson, a Birmingham native and graduate of the University of Alabama is a world-renowned professor of Biology at Harvard where he wins two Pulitzer Prizes for general nonfiction.

1995-2000

1995: Albert Murray's first novel, *South to a Very Old Place*, is reprinted in the prestigious Modern Library Series. Murray, of Nokomis, Alabama, publishes a trilogy of novels and nonfiction work on aesthetics, literature, race relations and music and becomes the first recipient of the Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer, in 1998.

1995: The Birmingham Museum's "Made In Alabama" exhibition and catalog is the first attempt at a comprehensive look at the state's art history.

1995: Dennis Covington's *Salvation on Sand Mountain*, a book that profiles a community of snake-handlers, is a finalist for a National Book Award.

1996: Cornelius Wright and John Henry Mealing of Birmingham are awarded National Heritage Fellowships by the NEA for their presentation of the work songs of the "gandydancer" to a younger audience.

1996: International ballet star Wes Chapman returns home to become Artistic Director of the Alabama Ballet.

1996: Phase I of the Urban Mural Project, one of the largest public sculptures in the Southeast, is dedicated in Birmingham. Covering the east wall of Boutwell Auditorium, the mural features around 9,000 (eventually to include 20,000) bricks individually created and produced by young participants in Space One Eleven's innovative City Center Art Program.

1996: The Alys Robinson Stephens Performing Arts Center opens in Birmingham with a concert by the National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leonard Slatkin.

1997: Han Nolan wins a National Book Award in Young People's Literature for *Dancing on the Edge*.

1998: Rick Bragg, a Pulitzer-Prize winning feature writer for the *New York Times*, wins critical acclaim for his autobiographical book, *All Over But the Shoutin'*. Much of the story recounts the dignity of working class people in Bragg's native northeast Alabama.

1998: The Huntsville Museum of Art moves from a small space in the Civic Center and opens a new \$7.7 million building.

1998: The Alabama State Board of Education approves the first comprehensive curriculum document for K-12 arts education program in Alabama's public schools. The document includes content standards for dance, music, theatre, and visual arts for grades K-12.

1999: The inaugural Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival in Birmingham screens over forty films, including six World Premieres and twelve Southeast Premieres.

2000: Helen Norris of Montgomery publishes her short story collection, *A Day in the Life of a Born-Again Loser*, her eighth work of fiction and receives the Harper Lee Award for 2000.

2000: Samuel Mockbee wins a McArthur "Genius" Award for his work with Auburn University's Rural Studio that he co-founded in 1993. This pioneering program joins the teaching of architecture with a commitment to public service by designing and constructing economical yet beautiful structures for residents in Alabama's Black Belt.

2000: The Alabama Dance Council produces an unprecedented showcase of eleven Alabama dance companies at the Bama Theatre in Tuscaloosa as part of the annual Dance Summit.

2000: Mobile Museum of Art, first opened in 1964, breaks ground for a 95,000 square foot building anticipated to open in 2002.

2000: Spotlight on Alabama artists, "Alabama Art 2000," opens in France coordinated by Nall, an internationally known artist and native of Troy.



Alabama Art is also featured in this hard-bound book by Nall.



Cornelius Wright and John Henry Mealing.



Fannie Flagg